

Chronology of Major Events in Federal Science Policy, 1787-2007

- 1787 U.S Constitution gives Congress power “to promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts”
- 1789 First Congress passes Patent and Copyright Acts
- 1804-06 Lewis and Clark Expedition
- 1844 Samuel F. B. Morse receives \$30,000 from Congress to build first telegraph line
- 1849 Smithsonian Institution develops weather observation network
- 1863 National Academy of Sciences Act 12 Stat. 806-07
- 1870 Congress creates Weather Bureau in War Department
- 1890 Congress creates civilian Weather Bureau in Dept. of Agriculture
- 1901 National Bureau of Standards created 31 Stat. 1449-1450
- 1915 national Advisory Committee on Aeronautics created
- 1930 National Institute of Health created, consolidates other federal Medical research programs
- 1941-47 Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) created by executive order; coordinated federal scientific R&D during World War II, including the Manhattan Project
- 1945 *Science—The Endless Frontier*, report by Vannevar Bush, head of OSRD
- 1946 Atomic Energy Act of 1946, created Atomic Energy Commission; commercial nuclear power made possible in 1954
- 1950 National Science Foundation Act, PL 507, with a mission “to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and to secure the national defense.”
- 1957-58 International Geophysical Year
- 1957 Soviet Union launches *Sputnik* on October 4
- 1958 National Aeronautics and Space Act, PL 85-568
Advanced Research Projects Agency (later DARPA) in DOD
- 1959 Treaty on Antarctica
- 1960 NSF Institutional Support Program, a capital program for university research infrastructure
- 1961 NASA Mercury Program begins; Alan Shepard becomes the first American in space on May 5
- 1962 NASA John Glenn becomes the first American to orbit the earth
- 1962-69 ARPA develops early Internet, ARPAnet launched in 1969
- 1965 NASA First American Space Walk
Environmental Science Services Administration (ESSA) created
- 1967 Weather Bureau renamed National Weather Service
NASA Loss of Apollo 1
- 1969 NASA Apollo 11 lands on the moon

- 1970 First “Earth Day”
NASA Apollo 13
ESSA becomes National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- 1972 NSF takes over management of twelve labs of DARPA
Space Shuttle Program authorized, PL 92-304
- 1973 NASA Skylab
Yom Kippur War; first oil embargo by OPEC on October 17
- 1974 Energy Research and Development Administration ERDA created in response to oil crisis
- 1975 NASA Apollo-Soyuz
- 1976 National Science and Technology Policy, Organization and Priorities Act, PL 94-282; Established Office of Science and Technology Policy in Executive Office of President
NASA Viking 1 and 2 probes reach Mars
- 1977 NASA Voyager “Grand Tour” of the Solar System
- 1978 Department of Energy created
- 1979 Voyager 1 reached Jupiter’s orbit
Creation of the Department of Energy
- 1979 Three Mile Island accident, March 28
Beginning of second oil crisis, April
- 1980 Synthetic Fuels Corporation created
- 1981 NASA Space Shuttle Program begins, first launch, April 12
- 1983 US Antarctic Program established
- 1985 NSF research in South Pole for ozone loss
Synthetic Fuels Corporation created and abolished
- 1986 NASA space shuttle *Challenger* disaster
- 1980s NSF assumes primary financial support and coordination of Internet, NSFnet
- 1990 NASA Hubble Space Telescope
- 1990s NSF develops math education standards with National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- 1992 Land Remote Sensing Policy Act (Landsat), PL 102-555
- 1993 NSF supported National Center for Supercomputing Applications at Univ. of Illinois, develop “Mosaic,” first web browser
- 1994 NSF, NASA, and DARPA launch Digital Library Initiative, predecessor of “Google”
- 1996 NSF discovers Antarctic Ozone hole
- 1998 NASA International Space Station (ISS)
- 2000 NSF, with other agencies, develops National Nanotechnology Initiative
- 2003 NASA space shuttle *Columbia* disaster
- 2007 America COMPETES (Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science) Act, PL 110-69



The Very Large Array, located near Socorro, New Mexico, consist of 27 radio antennas that are each 25 meters (82 feet) in diameter. It is the most scientifically productive ground-based telescope in the history of astronomy. (Photo courtesy of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory/Associated Universities, Inc.)



Carbon-free electricity from solar and nuclear power. (Photo courtesy of Warren Gretz/Department of Energy/National Renewable Energy Library)